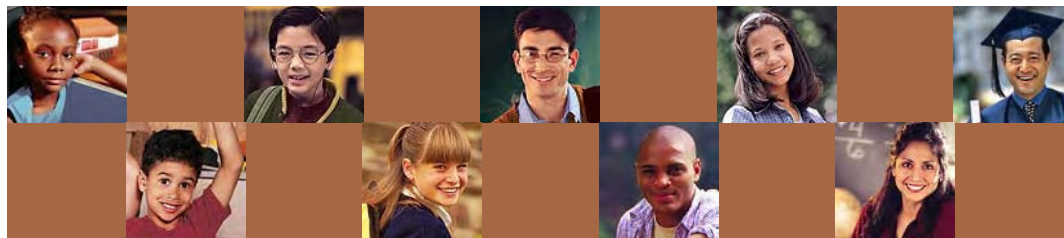


the condition of education 2005



INDICATOR 26

Time Spent in School

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2005*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2005*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.sap?pubid=2005094>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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Learning Opportunities

Time Spent in School

The average number of hours per year that U.S. public school students spent in school increased between 1987–88 and 1999–2000.

Various advocates of educational reform have called for students to spend more time in school (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983; Peterson 2003). Arguments for lengthening the school year assume that an increase in the time allocated to schooling would yield higher achievement. This indicator looks at the average number of hours per year (allocated time)¹ that public school students spent in school between 1987–88 and 1999–2000. It also compares the average number of instructional hours per year that students in the United States received compared with other countries in 2000 and 2001.

At all three instructional levels (elementary, middle, and high), the average number of hours a public school student spent in school per year rose between 1987–88 and 1999–2000. On average, middle school students spent more time in school than elementary or high school students. In both school years, the number of hours differed by location (see supplemental table 26-1). Students who attended rural schools spent more time in school, on average, than students in urban fringe/large town schools. In both 1987–88 and 1999–2000, regional differ-

ences were discernible: at all three instructional levels, students in the Midwest generally spent more time in school than their counterparts in the Northeast, South, and West.

International comparisons of instructional hours (vs. allocated time) revealed that among 15-year-olds in the 22 countries participating in the 2000 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), only Austrian students received more instructional hours per year than U.S. students (1,120 vs. 990 hours) (see supplemental table 26-2). In contrast, students in 10 countries (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Poland, Portugal, and Sweden) received fewer instructional hours per year than U.S. students. Among 4th graders² in 10 countries participating in the 2001 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), U.S. students received more instructional time, on average, than students in every country except Italy, where no measurable difference was found. Compared with students in the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, and Iceland, U.S. 4th-grade students received about 200 more hours of instruction per year.³

¹ Allocated time refers to the total number of hours per year a student is required to attend school and does not include extracurricular activities. Allocated time can be divided into *instructional* and *noninstructional* time. Instructional time refers to the portion of the school day that is allocated to instruction. Noninstructional time refers to the portion of the school day allocated to such activities as lunch, recess, school assemblies, and other required nonclassroom activities.

² The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) sample is taken from the upper of two adjacent grades with most 9-year-olds at the time of testing (4th grade in the United States and most countries). In other words, the goal was to assess students who had completed 4 years of formal education. The exceptions to this are England and New Zealand. The English and New Zealand students in PIRLS had received 5 years of formal schooling. The data for the United Kingdom are for England only.

³ For international comparisons of 8th-graders' achievement in mathematics and science, see NCES 2002–025, *indicator 13*. For international comparisons of 4th-graders in reading literacy, see NCES 2003–067, *indicator 10*.

NOTE: The average number of hours does include hours spent by students attending ungraded schools (i.e., not classified by standard grade levels).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Questionnaire" and "School District Questionnaire," 1987–88 and 1999–2000, previously unpublished tabulation (November 2004).

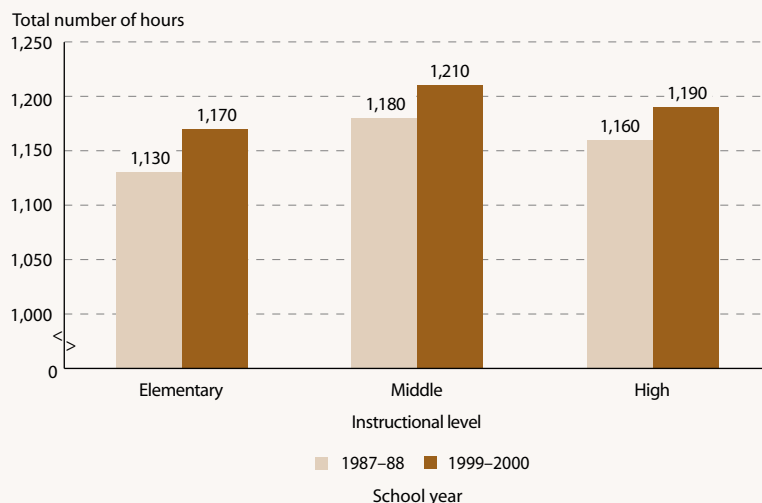
FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Notes 1, 3, 5
Supplemental Tables 26-1, 26-2
Peterson 2003

National Commission on
Excellence in Education 1983



HOURS SPENT IN SCHOOL: Total number of hours per year spent in public school per student, by instructional level: 1987–88 and 1999–2000



Time Spent in School

Table 26-1. Average number of hours per year and day spent in public school per student, by instructional level and selected school characteristics: 1987–88 and 1999–2000

School characteristic	Students in all grades ¹		Students in					
	Hours per year	Hours per day	Elementary		Middle		High	
	Hours per year	Hours per day	Hours per year	Hours per day	Hours per year	Hours per day	Hours per year	Hours per day
1987–88								
Total	1,140	6.4	1,130	6.3	1,180	6.6	1,160	6.5
Region								
Northeast	1,120	6.2	1,110	6.1	1,160	6.4	1,140	6.4
South	1,140	6.4	1,120	6.3	1,190	6.6	1,170	6.6
Midwest	1,180	6.6	1,170	6.6	1,210	6.8	1,190	6.7
West	1,090	6.1	1,080	6.0	1,140	6.3	1,110	6.1
Location								
Central city	1,120	6.3	1,110	6.2	1,170	6.6	1,150	6.4
Urban fringe/large town	1,130	6.3	1,110	6.2	1,170	6.5	1,150	6.4
Rural/small town	1,160	6.5	1,150	6.4	1,190	6.7	1,170	6.6
Percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch								
Less than 25	1,140	6.4	1,120	6.3	1,180	6.6	1,150	6.5
25–49	1,150	6.4	1,130	6.3	1,180	6.6	1,180	6.6
50–74	1,150	6.4	1,140	6.3	1,190	6.6	1,160	6.5
75 or more	1,140	6.3	1,120	6.3	1,180	6.6	1,160	6.4
1999–2000								
Total	1,180	6.6	1,170	6.5	1,210	6.8	1,190	6.6
Region								
Northeast	1,160	6.4	1,150	6.4	1,180	6.6	1,180	6.5
South	1,180	6.6	1,170	6.6	1,200	6.7	1,210	6.8
Midwest	1,220	6.8	1,210	6.7	1,240	6.9	1,230	6.9
West	1,130	6.4	1,130	6.3	1,180	6.7	1,110	6.3
Location								
Central city	1,170	6.6	1,160	6.5	1,200	6.7	1,200	6.7
Urban fringe/large town	1,170	6.5	1,160	6.5	1,200	6.7	1,170	6.5
Rural/small town	1,200	6.7	1,190	6.7	1,220	6.9	1,200	6.7
Percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch								
Less than 25	1,180	6.6	1,160	6.5	1,210	6.8	1,190	6.6
25–49	1,180	6.6	1,170	6.5	1,210	6.8	1,210	6.8
50–74	1,190	6.6	1,180	6.6	1,210	6.8	1,180	6.6
75 or more	1,180	6.6	1,170	6.5	1,220	6.8	1,160	6.5

¹ Includes students of combined schools but excludes students attending ungraded schools (i.e., not classified by standard grade levels).

NOTE: See *supplemental note 1* for the states in each region and for more information on location and school lunch. Data for students attending combined schools are not shown. See *supplemental note 3* for more information about the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), “Public School Questionnaire” and “School District Questionnaire,” 1987–88 and 1999–2000, previously unpublished tabulation (November 2004).

Time Spent in School

Table 26-2. Average number of instructional hours per year spent in public school, by age or grade of student and country: 2000 and 2001

Country	15-year-olds in 2000 ¹	4th-graders in 2001 ²
Austria	1,120	—
Belgium	980	—
Czech Republic	950	810
Denmark	910	—
Finland	860	—
France	1,020	910 ³
Germany	910	810
Greece	790	790
Hungary	870	—
Iceland	840	750
Ireland	950	—
Italy	1,020	1,040
Japan	1,020	—
Korea	990	—
New Zealand	970	940
Poland	870	—
Portugal	900	—
Spain	970	—
Sweden	900	860
Switzerland	980	—
United Kingdom ⁴	950	960
United States	990	1,040

— Not available.

¹ The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) sampled 15-year-old students. In the United States, this age corresponds largely to 9th- and 10th-grade students.

² The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) sample is taken from the upper of two adjacent grades with most 9-year-olds at the time of testing (4th grade in the United States and most countries). In other words, the goal was to assess students who had completed 4 years of formal education. The exceptions to this are England and New Zealand. The English and New Zealand students in PIRLS had received 5 years of formal schooling.

³ Data provided by the French ministry.

⁴ The data for 9-year-olds in the United Kingdom are for England only.

NOTE: Instructional hours was derived from the number of weeks in a school year, the number of class periods in the school week, and the number of instructional minutes in a single class period. See *supplemental note 5* for more information on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), "School Administrator Questionnaire" and 2001 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

Time Spent in School

Table S26. Standard errors for the total number of hours per year spent in public school per student, by instructional level: 1987–88 and 1999–2000

Instructional level	School year	
	1987–88	1999–2000
Elementary	2	2
Middle	4	3
High	3	4

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), “Public School Questionnaire” and “School District Questionnaire,” 1987–88 and 1999–2000, previously unpublished tabulation (November 2004).

Time Spent in School

Table S26-1. Standard errors for the average number of hours per year and day spent in public school per student, by instructional level and selected school characteristics: 1987–88 and 1999–2000

School characteristic	Students in all grades		Elementary		Students in Middle		High	
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
	per year	per day	per year	per day	per year	per day	per year	per day
1987–88								
Total	1	0.01	2	0.01	4	0.02	3	0.02
Region								
Northeast	3	0.02	3	0.02	8	0.04	6	0.03
South	3	0.01	3	0.02	5	0.03	5	0.03
Midwest	2	0.01	3	0.02	6	0.03	4	0.02
West	4	0.02	4	0.02	9	0.05	12	0.07
Location								
Central city	3	0.02	4	0.02	7	0.04	5	0.03
Urban fringe/large town	3	0.01	4	0.02	6	0.03	6	0.03
Rural/small town	2	0.01	3	0.02	6	0.03	4	0.02
Percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch								
Less than 25	2	0.01	2	0.01	5	0.03	4	0.02
25–49	3	0.02	4	0.02	7	0.04	5	0.03
50–74	4	0.02	5	0.03	11	0.07	9	0.05
75 or more	5	0.03	6	0.03	15	0.08	12	0.07
1999–2000								
Total	2	0.01	2	0.01	3	0.02	4	0.02
Region								
Northeast	4	0.02	4	0.02	10	0.06	7	0.04
South	3	0.01	5	0.01	4	0.02	5	0.02
Midwest	2	0.01	3	0.02	5	0.03	4	0.02
West	4	0.02	5	0.03	5	0.03	14	0.08
Location								
Central city	4	0.01	5	0.02	8	0.04	7	0.04
Urban fringe/large town	3	0.01	3	0.02	5	0.03	7	0.04
Rural/small town	2	0.01	3	0.02	5	0.02	4	0.02
Percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch								
Less than 25	3	0.02	5	0.01	4	0.02	7	0.04
25–49	3	0.02	3	0.02	6	0.03	9	0.05
50–74	5	0.03	6	0.03	7	0.04	12	0.07
75 or more	4	0.02	4	0.02	11	0.06	13	0.07

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Questionnaire" and "School District Questionnaire," 1987–88 and 1999–2000, previously unpublished tabulation (November 2004).

Time Spent in School

Table S26-2. Standard errors for the average number of instructional hours per year spent in public school, by age or grade of student and country: 2000 and 2001

Country	15-year-olds in 2000	4th-graders in 2001
Austria	13.8	†
Belgium	9.4	†
Czech Republic	5.3	16.4
Denmark	10.9	†
Finland	0.2	†
France	13.9	#
Germany	5.0	11.3
Greece	7.8	11.3
Hungary	7.2	†
Iceland	2.0	12.4
Ireland	7.1	†
Italy	10.6	13.1
Japan	13.7	†
Korea	17.9	†
New Zealand	8.6	4.7
Poland	18.1	†
Portugal	10.8	†
Spain	7.8	†
Sweden	13.7	14.0
Switzerland	6.0	†
United Kingdom	3.4	7.0
United States	26.8	11.3

† Not applicable.

Rounds to zero.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), "School Administrator Questionnaire" and 2001 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).